



# Consumers Guide

VOL. III, No. 9  
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The Weather Bureau Lends a Hand

## Consumers' Queries and Comments

"Agriculture has been bearing its share of the city relief load in a truly heroic manner. The land has had to serve its age-old function as a cushion for the refugees of the depression. In the five years from 1930 to 1935 the number of farms increased about half a million and we now have the largest farm population on record. This is only one of the reasons why we have had an agricultural program."

Henry A. Wallace,  
Secretary of Agriculture

**C** WE SAW the other day a sample of the kind of interpretation of official data which distresses painstaking nutritionists. A popular writer, taking from the CONSUMERS' GUIDE suggestions contained in a chart on the kinds and amounts of food which the Bureau of Home Economics indicates will furnish an adequate diet at minimum cost, translated these amounts into dollars and cents, and announced that the "Bureau of Home Economics of the Agriculture Department yesterday disclosed the secret of how to feed a family of three on \$9.82 a week."

THESE charts which are published in every other issue of the GUIDE from studies made by

the Bureau of Home Economics, do not present the only assortments of foods which will furnish an adequate diet at minimum cost. The list is suggestive only. Families can achieve such a diet level by other assortments of foods.

GROUPS of foods described in the charts give considerable latitude of choice to the family food planner. If economy is important, then selections can be the cheapest type of food within each group. Selecting the more expensive types and quality obviously will not result in an adequate diet "at minimum cost."

**C** "YOUR article on moth-prevention helps but it doesn't go far enough", writes a Virginia consumer in response to "Pack Away Your Winter Woolens" in the April 6 issue of the CONSUMERS' GUIDE.

"SOME of the worst damage done in my household has been by a pest that my neighbors call the "buffalo bug." Will the same preventives you recommended for moths work for buffalo bugs?" Frequent cleaning of clothes, fabrics, rugs, furs, and such—the more thorough, the better—is the shortest route to complete elimination of carpet beetles, sometimes called "buffalo bugs", as household pests. But if they once get a start in a closet or under a rug, fumigation is indicated. Next best, cleaning the closets thoroughly, treating cracks and crevices with kerosene, and washing or cleaning or sunning and shaking the clothes and carpets, are the

best steps to take. In a tight container, the same chemicals recommended against moths will make a gas potent enough to kill the beetle at any stage of his career. Those chemicals are naphthalene, paradichlorobenzene, and gum camphor.

**C** TRI-STATE Packers' Association whose members, located in Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey, are packers chiefly of vegetables, gave Government grade labeling a hand when they passed a resolution at their convention in Baltimore in April. Their resolution commended "The largest food distributing organization in the United States" for its cooperation and promotion of grade labeling.

**C** CONSUMERS interested in keeping posted on Federal, State, and local work in enforcing weights and measures laws may want to get a copy of Miscellaneous Publication M156—recently released—which is a report on the proceedings of the 25th National Conference on Weights and Measures. This conference, held a year ago in Washington, was the first since 1931 and the report includes papers and discussions showing developments in the field of weights and measures during the previous four years. Federal authorities, too, report among other things on the National Bureau of Standards "labeling and certification" plan; on Federal legislation relating to standard containers and food and drug control. Copies may be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington. Price, 20 cents.



## The Weather Bureau Lends a Hand

Reducing the gamble in farming means increasing the returns to farmers and consumers. Forecasts from the Weather Bureau have a hand in soil and food conservation.



**I**T'S EIGHT o'clock in the morning. Telegraph, radio, and teletype messages start pouring into an angular, gaunt, red brick building in Washington—not one of the show places of a city resplendent with great pillared buildings, but the headquarters of a branch of the Department of Agriculture which figures more conspicuously in the lives of the citizens of its country than any other.

STRANGE jumbles of words come in these messages: "ARTHUR FIENDISH RAKE SIRDAR UNFURL TEPID" reads one. Another, "BETHEL EIGHT REV-ELLED NAILBALL GIG FORGOT." Still more click in through the busy instruments in the main receiving room. Here's one from the South, "MIAMI ANNOY GULLISH FENOWED MORAL CATSUP."

NO WHIMSICAL humor of a too imaginative Government clerk lurks behind these words.

They bear serious messages to be put to serious uses. They have been selected by scientists who know the supreme importance of accuracy and precision in reporting, and the necessity for economy. They are a code for reporting weather conditions hither and yon over the country and supply the basis for the reports you will be reading shortly in your newspaper or hearing from your radio.

WHILE you linger over your breakfast coffee, weather observers at some 300 stations in the United States, Canada, Alaska, and the West Indies, are at work reading their instruments, completing their observations, trans-



Pilots know about what to expect in weather 6 to 8 hours ahead, thanks to the forecasts prepared by the Weather Bureau, and they in turn report back to their stations, for the aid of other pilots, information on weather conditions they encounter.

lating measures of heat and cold, wind and clouds and moisture in the air into code and transmitting these code words to each of the Weather Bureau's five forecast centers, chief of which is in Washington. Land messages come in words. From ships at sea come weather reports in number code. All observations are dispatched as nearly as possible at the same time all over the country. Each forecasting center receives dispatches from most of the official observers.

"BOSTON ENDANGER SAMBO FORMFUL CURRENCY", wires one station. Quickly the decoder reads and translates. The report is from Boston. "Endanger" means a sea level barometric pressure of 30.04 inches and temperature of air 22 degrees. "Sambo" tells him that the sky over the Boston observer is partly cloudy; the wind is blowing from the northwest at 18 miles per hour. "Formful" indicates the barometric pressure has been steadily increasing at the rate of 0.08 inch in the last 3 hours and the maximum temperature during the day was 30 degrees. "Currency" reports the sky is half covered with high thin clouds moving from the east.

WIND, heat and cold, humidity, clouds, rain—these humors of the great ocean of air at the bottom of which we live, that start or

stop the activities of all living things on the earth, that go their ways uncontrolled and uncontrollable by earthbound creatures—these are the great forces about which telegrams and radio messages are dispatched to the Weather Bureau each morning and again each evening at the same hour. Scientists have learned enough about weather changes to be able, with precise reports at hand on present atmospheric conditions, to make forecasts of what will likely happen in this ocean of air during the next 36 to 48 hours, and their forecasts will be at least within 20 percent of complete accuracy and often much better than that.

EACH detail of each weather report received at 8 o'clock, morning and evening, in Washington from land and sea, from remote and near observation stations, is essential in the making of that forecast. To simplify their interpretation, chartmen record the reports pouring in. Because words are bulky and not so easily and quickly read, weather facts must be translated back into simpler form. They are marked as symbols or figures on maps of the United States.

SYMBOLS and figures representing temperature and barometric conditions go down on one chart. Changes in barometric pressure occurring in the past 12 hours are marked on another. A third chart shows changes in temperature in the last 24 hours. Speed and direction of wind at various altitudes can be read from a fourth. Quickly and accurately these recordings must be made, because time changes their validity and reduces their usefulness.

NOW comes the expert interpreter of these reports, the District Forecaster, who must be at his desk each morning and evening at 8:30, ready when the charts are completed, to spell out of those symbols and signs the portents of weather to come. Years of special training in meteorology, years of study and experience, are behind the District Forecaster as he steps up to the maps twice daily and in a few minutes only is able to make his interpretations and predictions of probable turns in weather.

OTHER District Forecasters, in New Orleans, Jacksonville, Chicago, Denver, and



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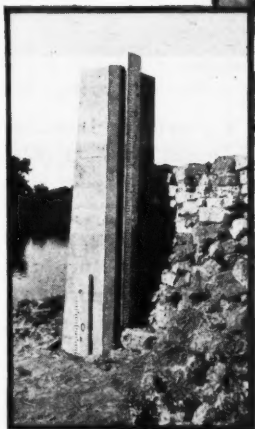
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San Francisco, are ready to make their predictions for their territories at exactly the same time that the Washington Forecaster examines his reports. Each one of these experts, within a few minutes, can cast his eyes on weather conditions all over the country. What he sees in the maps on his desk tells him far more than he could know even if he were to fly high enough above the earth to view the country end to end. At such a height he would be far above the highest clouds and all the atmospheric disturbances that we care about in our day to

Cooperative observers help supervising stations of the Weather Bureau maintained in the mountain regions of the West in obtaining measurements of the depth and water content of the winter snows. These measurements aid in determining the amount of water that will be available during the following season for the benefit of irrigation and other purposes. The snow measuring staff in this picture (right) records a 12-foot fall on Mt. Rainier, Washington.



Traveling weather stations (above) are used by the Weather Bureau as a new aid in controlling forest fires in California. . . . Human life and property are safeguarded by the flood warnings of the Weather Bureau which collects from about 900 substations measurements of precipitation in drainage basins of streams and observations of height of water on gages placed at strategic points (left). With these measurements and observations, the Bureau is able to predict quite accurately the height of a flood crest and the time it will reach various places along the course of the big rivers.



office. "Fair and warmer tonight. Tomorrow fair", in Washington, the Forecaster dictates and the typist writes. "Showers and cooler tonight. Tomorrow cloudy", at some other point. And so on.

WITHIN 2 hours after the morning observations have been taken, these forecasts are telegraphed to nearly 2,000 principal distributing points. From there they are scattered far and wide by telegraph, telephone, radio, and mail. Within an hour of the time they are issued, they are available to mil-

day plannings would be far beneath him.

FIRST the Forecaster draws lines through Chart I before him, lines connecting points which have the same sea-level barometric pressure, lines through points having the same air temperature. Beside him is a typist ready to take down on his machine the forecast for each locality within the States covered by his

lions of newspaper readers, radio listeners, and telephone subscribers. Nearly 90,000 copies are sent by mail, most of them to be delivered early in the day, none of them later than 6 p. m. Weather maps are dispatched from 45 stations immediately after the morning forecast is telegraphed.

MORNING and evening, this routine is repeated. For the East, observation time is 8



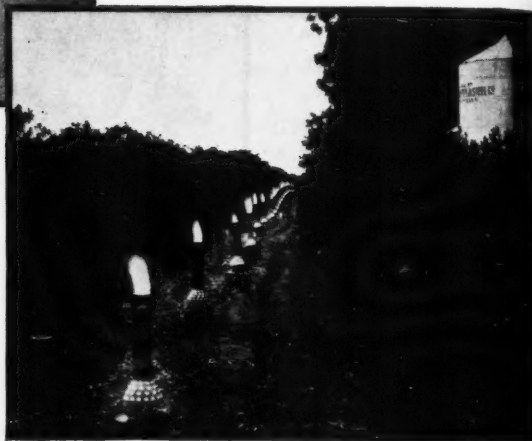
For years maritime interests have had from 12 to 24 hours notice of dangerous storms from "storm warnings", indicated here (left) by arrows, which the Weather Bureau displays at more than 400 points along the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf Coasts, and the shores of the Great Lakes. Cold wave warnings, shown here by the black dots, are issued from 24 to 36 hours in advance. They are announced throughout threatened regions by telephone, radiograph, radiophone, and mail, and in some localities by the display of flags. . . . Freezing weather warnings, issued in advance by the Weather Bureau, are signals to orchard growers to protect their orchards from frost, which saves fruit growers many millions of dollars. Some oil heaters are pictured below burning at night in a citrus grove after the Weather Bureau's forecast of a destructive frost.

a. m. and 8 p. m. Eastern Standard Time. For the Far West it is 5 a. m. and 5 p. m. Pacific Standard Time. Morning forecasts are usually for 36 hours in advance; evening forecasts are for 48 hours.

NOAH is credited with being the first forecaster. Whoever was first matters little. More significant is the fact that for thousands of years forecasting was pretty much a hit-and-miss matter. Proverbs sometimes worked, but often missed. Aristotle was the first to attempt a reasonable explanation and write it down, and his analysis was not much improved upon for 2,000 years.

DEVELOPMENT of present forecasting had to await the development of instruments which could enable humans to observe with more precision how nature works and not just reason how it should operate. One of the earliest known weather instruments was a rain gage which Koreans apparently were the first to design in the fifteenth century, A. D. This instrument was not known in Europe until some 200 years later. Vastly more important was the invention of the thermometer, to measure temperature, by Galileo, at the end of the sixteenth century. A little later came the barometer to measure air pressure.

TODAY to aid our Forecasters there are a multitude of delicately balanced instru-



ments, capable of a precision incalculably more accurate than the human eye, to measure temperature, air pressure, wind speed and direction at the surface of the earth and above the earth, speed and direction of clouds, radiation from the sun, the amount of moisture in the air, sunshine, precipitation, evaporation, and so on. Many of these instruments make automatic records.

EQUALLY important in forecasting to the technique of making observations is the technique of collecting them. Weather knows no boundaries of city or country, State or Nation. Winds, clouds, heat, and cold, move with great sweeps over vast areas, insensitive to the imaginary lines humans draw separating their lands, sensitive only to oceans and mountains and sun. When inventors made possible the rapid collection of weather observations from remote places by telegraph and radio they not only increased the accuracy and ease of forecasting

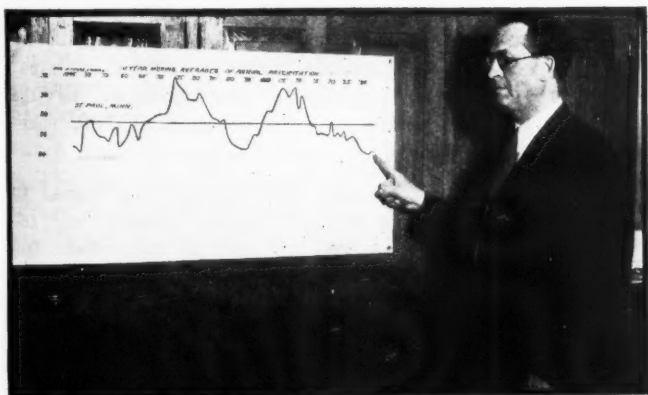


The District Forecaster in the Washington headquarters of the Weather Bureau examines the morning weather map and in a few minutes will be ready to dictate weather predictions to the typist (not in the picture) to his left.



Weather maps, of use particularly to producers, distributors, and transportation interests, are mailed from Weather Bureau stations immediately after the morning forecast is telegraphed. The draftsman here is preparing a small version of the big map from which the Forecaster had previously made his predictions.

but made possible our present vast system for disseminating forecasts. Invention of the airplane 33 years ago, helped forecasting, too, by increasing and improving the opportunity for observations in what scientists call the "upper air." Every airplane pilot nowadays not only receives Weather Bureau forecasts but sends back to earth his observations of weather conditions along his route.



Some experts believe weather travels in cycles—a series of dry years followed by a series of wet years. A Weather Bureau expert shows here two fairly protracted periods of scanty rainfall, one ending in 1864 and the other in 1894, which were followed by several successive years of excessive rainfall. Scientists working on the important new weather research project are examining the soundness of this theory of weather "cycles" and its possible aid in predicting average weather for a whole region.

ORGANIZED weather observation in this country is only a little more than 100 years old, a brief moment in meteorological time. It started in 1817 under the Commissioner General of the Land Office. Two years later the Surgeon General of the Army instituted a system of meteorological observations at military posts. In 1841 the Patent Office and in 1847 the Smithsonian Institution started observing weather changes. The first published weather forecasts based on simultaneous observations collected by telegraph were issued by the Smithsonian, just 12 years after the invention of the electric telegraph. Under the direction of the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce a system for collecting ob-

servations daily from 30 stations and issuing daily weather "probabilities" was started in 1869.

ARMY uses for such information led Congress in 1870 to authorize the taking of meteorological observations by the Signal Service of the War Department. Twenty-one years later, in 1891, this service—now necessary to more civilian than military activities—was transferred to the Department of Agriculture and the present Weather Bureau established.

TODAY a great network of stations, some 7,000 of them, is spread over the country to collect news of the weather and to scatter forecasts of weather to come. Staffed by the Weather Bureau experts are 240 "first order stations", more than 60 of which are at airports. Included in these are the 6 forecasting centers; 45 stations where climatological data are collected; 68 which collect and distribute data on river "stages." Stations in 2,300 localities are managed by local people who read the recording instruments, report them to "first order stations" and in emergencies display warning signals. Topping all these branches of the Weather Bureau are 4,500 cooperative observers, people who are paid nothing by the Government but volunteer their time and ability.

ONLY indirectly do industrial enterprises have to gamble against the whims of nature, but with farming, shipping, and aviation the gamble is direct reality. Every day the Weather Bureau is reducing their risks. Even a 24- or a 36-hour warning to farmers can make the difference between success or failure.

CONSUMERS share with farmers their weather losses by being forced to pay high for weather-damaged supplies. If rain fails to come soon after seed has been planted, farmers' crops and consumers' pocketbooks may suffer. Farmers know that if there is not going to be enough moisture soon after planting, there is no use in planting. The Weather Bureau helps them to choose their time. It helps at harvesting. When cutting time comes, the farmer wants to know what are the chances of rain. Hay has to cure in the sun. Rain injures it. His Weather Bureau report helps him to decide whether tomorrow he will start his harvesting.

OTHER ways in which the services of the Weather Bureau help in conserving food and thereby in conserving soil mount up. Fruit growers watch weather forecasts to know when they should spray their trees. There is not much use in spraying before a heavy rain. Fruits should be picked in advance of rain, so that they can be shipped dry. Weather Bureau reports help the grower to choose his day. Vegetables dug in dry weather, too, are shipped in better condition. Raisin and prune growers know the losses that can come from rain. Warnings help them to protect their fruit, spread out in great trays to dry, by stacking and covering.

WARNINGS of frost, issued 24 to 36 hours in advance, have often saved whole orchards. In the large orchards in southern and western parts of the country, growers use stoves to keep freezing temperature from ruining their fruit. Stoves are expensive to run. Used unnecessarily they can wipe out all the profit in a crop. On the other hand one night of freezing weather may ruin the crop on which the grower depends entirely for his income. In Pacific States alone some 4 million orchard heaters are in use, in the operation of which growers depend largely on advices and warnings given by the Weather Bureau. The value of the oranges, vegetables, and strawberries protected and saved on a single night in a limited district in Florida, through warnings of freezing weather sent out by the Weather Bureau, is reported to have been \$100,000. In citrus fruit districts of California, fruit to the value of 14 million dollars was likewise saved on another occasion. Trained meteorologists are assigned by the Weather Bureau to protect growers from unexpected frosts.

COLD wave notices are the signal to other growers to pick beans, grapes, and tobacco. Potato digging must be suspended. Dug potatoes must be removed from the field. Sugar-cane must be cut and windrowed. Cranberry bogs must be flooded until after the cold weather spell has passed or the danger of frost is over. Truck growers must protect their tender vegetables by covering with paper, cloth, or soil. All these growers look to the Weather Bureau for its help in forestalling losses.

CATTLE-REGION bulletins, giving Weather Bureau predictions, are published at  
[Concluded on page 22]





## Spring Meat in the Market

Now is the season for choicest types of veal and lamb. Meat graders can help you select both type and quality you like.

**Y**OUNGEST meat animals provide the tenderest, most delicate flavored meat, according to the general opinion of the meat industry and most consumers.

MODERN breeding practices bring us these young cuts of meat all year around. Dairies, whose surplus calves make up the biggest part of our preferred "milk-fed" veal supply, arrange to have calves come at every season in order to stabilize their milk supply. Lambs are specially produced for the quality trade ahead of their normal season by "hothouse" methods.

SPRING, though, still holds its lead as the season when most calves and lambs arrive on average farms. So consumers can expect to find a bigger proportion of the young choice lamb and veal on the market in April, May, and June than at any other time of year, at correspondingly lower prices.

MEAT GRADING experts in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics can answer the consumers' questions, "When does veal become beef?", and "When does lamb turn into mutton?"

VEAL by one definition is meat from calves less than 1 year old. But that is an unsatisfactory arbitrary way of looking at a picture which changes with changing methods of raising meat animals.

SIZE and development are better indications of maturity than the actual age of the animal. Steers bred especially for quick growth and early maturity can qualify as beef far ahead of their first birthday.

CALVES, while definitely not approaching the beef age, still differ tremendously in the meat they provide, depending on their age, feeding, and weight for age. A calf a few weeks old fed nothing but milk provides an entirely different piece of meat from the same cut from a calf 6 or 8 months old which has lived on range grass. Yet consumers buy both under

U.S.  
PRIME  
LAMB

B.A.E.

U.S.  
OFFICIALLY  
GRADED

extent on the  
market you  
buy in and  
the price you  
pay.

#### MEAT

GRADERS recognize this distinction between younger and older calf meat. To them, calves that have been brought up exclusively on whole milk or a diet producing the same kind of flesh, are "vealers." To qualify for this title a calf must usually be less than 12 weeks old, and most vealers that come to the slaughterhouse are from 3 to 6 weeks old. Calves too old to qualify as "vealers" and yet not mature enough for beef are subject to a separate grading stamp classification as "calf."

"VEALERS" are naturally largely the byproduct of the dairy industry. But some are the young of beef cattle, sent to market earlier than usual.

OLDER CALVES come to slaughter as a result of different economic necessities on the farm. In certain parts of the South, for instance, the best beef cattle cannot survive the adverse conditions, including ticks and other pests. Yet the pasture season is long, an asset to a farmer who wants to raise his animals on a small feeding investment. Government researchers are helping farmers in these districts to overcome their disadvantages and turn their advantages into a better living. At the experi-

the one name "veal" in the retail market, just as they buy "baby beef", yearling, or older cattle meat under the general name of "beef." Practically speaking, what you get when you ask for veal depends to a large

U.S.  
CHOICE  
LAMB

B.A.E.

U.S.  
OFFICIALLY  
GRADED

U.S.  
GOOD  
LAMB

B.A.E.

U.S.  
OFFICIALLY  
GRADED

mental station at Tifton, Georgia, State and Federal agriculturists demonstrated how. They bred the native cow, acclimated to the local adversities, to high-grade beef animals. The calves with this combination of heritages were allowed to roam with their mothers eating their fill of milk and grass. At the end of the best pasture season, they were sold. They brought a good price for their age of 120 days, and produced good meat.

"BABY BEEF", cause of much furore among meat men, is not just the meat from older calves. It is the meat from fully matured well-fattened beef animals. Many cattle breeders have been going in for the special breeding and feeding that produces

U.S.  
MEDIUM  
LAMB

B.A.E.

U.S.  
OFFICIALLY  
GRADED

heavy weight and early maturity at a young age, below 15 months and going down sometimes as low as 7 months. This farm wind blows consumers good, just as the dairy surplus calves give us specially tender meat. For the younger the animal—other things being equal—the more tender the beef. Also many consumers are glad to be able to get good thick steaks for broiling which at the same time do not weigh too heavily on their purse. The same advantage applies to roasts. Rib roasts from baby beef fit into the apartment roasting pan.

MOST VEAL in good markets is tender enough to meet the average needs of most consumers. Those who want to make sure of getting meat from the young milk-fed vealers must have the expert eye of a meat grader or buy meat stamped with Government grades. We list the points for which the grader looks to indicate veal of highest quality.

FAT, within limits, is the most important indication of superior quality in any meat. This is especially true of veal, where fat is not too plentiful at best. So important is the fat factor that vealers light for their

age are not eligible for the top grade "Prime." The next classification, "Medium weight" has five grading possibilities, from "Prime" down to "Common." But on the heavyweight vealers weighing 110 pounds or more, there are only four grades, the top four. It would be impossible to find a vealer that was heavy for its age grading below "Medium." Consumers can learn to recognize a generally plump look to the piece as the butcher cuts it, even though they may not see the part of the carcass where the heaviest deposits of fat surround the kidneys. This fat is creamy white and slightly tinged with pink.

FLESH of highest grade veal is "firm, very fine-grained and velvety, and has a rich pinkish-brown color." Bones, as the butcher cuts through them, show themselves to be soft and red.

OLDER calf veal is measured according to the standards set by young veal. It is naturally not possible to compare grades of two different classes of meats, but consumers who buy either veal or calf by Government grade can be sure of getting a uniform quality belonging in the exact position on the value scale that it is marked.

HIGHEST quality veal, seldom found on the market, is "U. S. Prime, or No. A 1." If you get this grade, you are sure to get milk-fed veal, since calf meat is not eligible for "Prime" grade. The next grade is "U. S. Choice or No. 1." Third down is "U. S. Good or No. 2." Fourth is "U. S. Medium or No. 3." Fifth from the top is "U. S. Common or No. 4." Sixth comes "U. S. Cull."

GRADE stamps are in harmless purple ink, one word to the line repeated right down the column. The first line says "U. S." The second line gives the grade, such as "Choice." The third line gives the class to which the meat belongs, such as "Veal" or "Calf." The fourth line carries the initials "B. A. E." which stand for the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in the Department of Agriculture, responsible for all Government meat grading. Whether buying lamb, veal, or other kinds of meat or poultry, consumers do well to look for the purple grade stamp.

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U. S.  
PRIME  
VEAL  
B. A. E.

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U. S.  
CHOICE  
VEAL  
B. A. E.

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tem of grade recommendation by the private company selling the meat.

MOST graded veal you find in the market will be "Choice" or "Good", since it is the best that goes to the grader. Most ungraded veal, if graded, would fall in or below the "Good" grade. Volume of graded veal, though still small in proportion to total slaughter, is rising. 1935 saw almost a third more veal go under the Government grader's stamp than in 1934. This 1935 grading represents a bigger part of the total slaughter, since in 1934 farmers sold a vast number of animals at an early age and low degree of finish because the drought put a stop to further feeding.

MORE LAMB than veal receives Government grades. While Government-graded veal rose from just under 2 million pounds in 1934 to 2½

INSPECTION stamps have a different appearance and different significance. They mean that the meat has been inspected for its wholesomeness, edibility, and purity from the point of view of health. Only meat in plants which sell in interstate commerce must be Federally inspected. Local laws in some places take care of other meat, but the insurance this gives depends upon the local situation. About two-thirds of America's total meat supply is federally inspected. Probably a smaller proportion of veal is federally inspected than of other meats because so much of it is slaughtered at the farm and in small local plants. The Federal meat inspection stamp gives absolute assurance of safety anywhere. It is round, purple, and says "U. S. Inspected and Passed" or an abbreviation of those words.

OTHER stamps, even purple-colored ones, are sometimes found on meat.

They are not official Government assurances, but often represent some sys-

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U. S.  
GOOD  
VEAL  
B. A. E.

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U. S.  
MEDIUM  
VEAL  
B. A. E.

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million pounds in 1935, lamb almost doubled its graded poundage, rising from 9½ million pounds in 1934 to 17½ million pounds in 1935.

LAMB grades have the same names as those for veal, and the same points indicate superiority: "Conformation", or general symmetrical blocky body outline; "finish" or degree of fattening; and "quality", which is dependent on the other two factors. Fat plays the same prominent part in lamb as in veal, though there is more fat on the best lamb than on the best veal. As in veal, there should be a general sense of plumpness, small soft bones which in the case of lamb are merely tinged with red. Superior lamb flesh should be fine-grained, and smooth or velvety. In color it should be light pink; the darker the flesh the older or less desirable the lamb.

SPRING LAMB is meat from "milk lambs" which have lived almost exclusively on milk. Their flesh is uniformly tender and a shade lighter than that of more mature lambs. They are usually 3 to 5 months old when they go to market, mostly in April, May, and June.

HOTHOUSE LAMB comes earlier on the market, a delicacy very carefully produced for special quality markets in the big cities, under artificially favorable conditions. Almost all hothouse lamb meat sold, whether graded or ungraded, would come within the requirements of Choice or Good grades.

YEARLING mutton graduates from the lamb class at about 12 to 14 months and leaves the yearling class to be called mature at about 20 months. The exact line between lamb and yearling mutton is drawn at the point where the sheep gets its first permanent teeth. But in America lamb represents 80 percent of the slaughter, yearling mutton and mature mutton only 10 percent apiece. The reason for our lack of mutton chops such as England produces goes back into early American history.

WOOL was the main goal of our first sheep breeding. The best mutton-type sheep, raised on the famous English downs, produces only a few pounds of wool a year, while the sheep that give 12 or 14 pounds of wool are not the type that produce the best tasting meat. So the few incidental byproducts of the wool industry that reached the American market as mutton did not build the mutton-eating habit among American

consumers. Consumers began to choose lamb rather than mutton, since its youth made it more delicately flavored and tender. Breeders then had an incentive for sending more and more young, well-fed lambs to market. As a result, people in this country who had been eating an average of only 4½ pounds of lamb apiece in a year raised the average to over 7 pounds in 1931. And lamb, which had been a luxury food, is taking a bigger spot each year on the everyday marketing list.

THOUGH MUTTON may never take a really important place in American consumption, the trend is toward larger size lambs. This is a slow process, because consumption habits are difficult to change. When a woman gets used to getting a certain number of chops to the pound she doesn't like to change her plans overnight to accommodate fewer chops of heavier weight apiece. And the small leg of lamb weighing about 4 to 6½ pounds fits into her habitual menus better than larger ones. Some retailers buy heavy legs weighing about 7½ or 8 pounds and cut them so as to make two roasts instead of one, meeting the apartment housekeepers' and the sheep raisers' requirements at one time. So, though the market resists the heavier weights, the top limit is gradually being pushed up.

KEEPING FLAVOR and the other desirable qualities for which consumers learned to like the young lambs, while at the same time sending bigger lambs to market, calls for scientific skill. But if the lamb is the proper type of meat, its more pronounced flavor as it grows more mature is even more desirable to many experts. The goal, then, is to achieve this palatable type of meat while sacrificing little or none of the wool-producing characteristics. Sheep raisers with the help of Government research are heading definitely toward this goal.

PRICES of lamb chops and veal outlet may still seem high, even at this most favorable time of year. But there are less expensive lamb and veal cuts. Breast of veal and lamb, always well under 20 cents a pound, can be made with skill and imagination into a dish fit for a President.

VEAL has more lean meat per pound than any other meat. Fat makes its contribution to

[Concluded on page 22]



# Supplying Food for Adequate Consumption

**A**NYONE'S guess is as good as another's as to how many neckties are necessary to adequate living, but guessing is out when it comes to counting the calories or listing the food nutrients which a person needs for an adequate diet. For food, scientists have worked out much more definite yardsticks than for any other necessity. None of their diet standards is final even yet, but they come closer to supplying a workable measure of present shortcomings as against ideal goals than do any other estimates of human needs.

PULLING these diet yardsticks out of the laboratories and standing them up against actual consumption is a difficult job. No one needs a measuring rod to see that some families can buy much less than others, and could buy much less even in our "prosperous" years. Nor is it difficult to see in the poor teeth, the puny and rickety bodies, the grave effects of underconsumption of the right kinds of foods. But to measure underconsumption quantitatively, to set a standard of food consumption toward which the country should work, requires more than a naked eye observation.

DIETARY standards must be matched against actual consumption, not just by the country as a whole but by people who have different sized incomes. One of the things we know is that the amount of food consumed varies with the size of the family pocketbook. Another thing is that the kind and quality of food purchased varies with the size of the pocketbook.

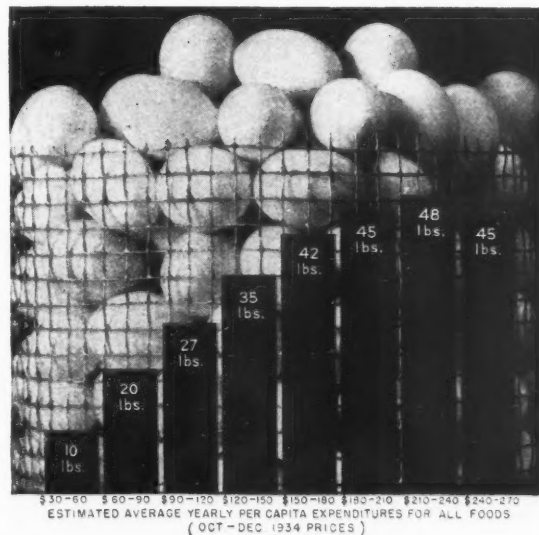
TO MEASURE actual total consumption by income groups, we must know: First, how much families are spending on food; second, how many are spending various amounts; and third, what families ordinarily buy with the amounts they spend. Answers on all these points must be in hand before we can even begin to estimate how deficient, by good diet standards, present consumption is, and how much more food or what changes in the type of food would be needed to supply everyone with at least an adequate diet.

THROUGH good years and bad—and we have had a lot of both in the history of our

If everyone could buy an adequate diet how much more food would we need? A start at getting an answer to this major question has been made by three important government offices.

country—we have jogged along, never knowing the answer to these fundamental questions. Not until a few months ago was research on a sufficiently broad scale started to probe for the facts that are needed if we are going to build a healthier nation. For more than 40 years, the Department of Agriculture has been collecting facts on the content, cost, and nutritional adequacy—or inadequacy—of American diets, but it has never had enough funds to do the job in a comprehensive way. The Bureau of Labor Statistics, too, has been collecting information on family food expenditures and consumption but its researches likewise have been necessarily limited. Other public and private agencies have tackled the job, but they too have only pecked at the problem. Some of these studies give information on the quantities of food consumed, but not on cost; some give data on cost but not

CONSUMPTION OF EGGS STEPS UP AS FOOD EXPENDITURES INCREASE



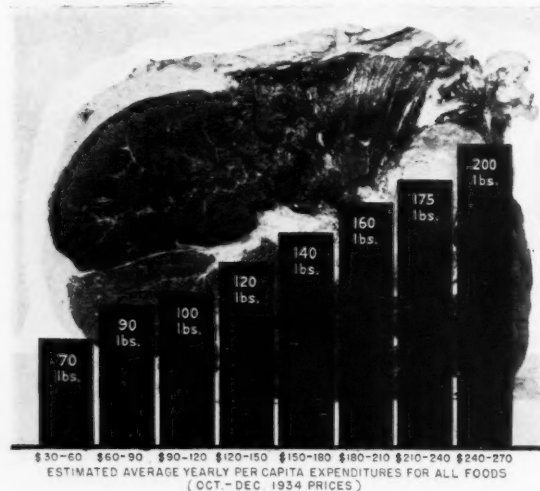
on quantities; some report only on certain foods rather than on the diet as a whole.

A NEW and tremendously important research into America's food spending and eating habits is now under way. When it is completed we shall have a better idea than we have ever had before of who is buying the foods which farmers produce, what it is costing consumers, how much of the family budget has to be spent for foods, and what nutritive values families are getting from their food. Not until information such as this is available can intelligent planning for bigger and better food production for the country be contemplated.

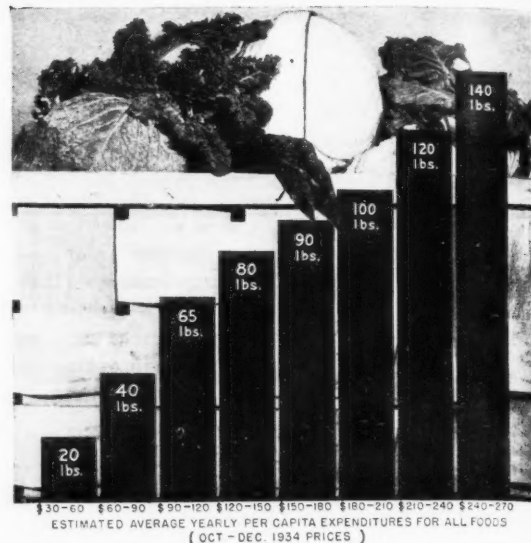
RESEARCH on this major problem is in the competent hands of the National Resources Committee, which supervises general plans; the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which is collecting information on large city family expenditures; and the Bureau of Home Economics of the Department of Agriculture, which is collecting similar information from farm, village, and small town families. When all records are in, this Bureau will measure the food values of city and farm family diets. Cooperating with these offices are thousands of families in cities and small towns who are keeping close tabs on their food expenditures. Without their volunteer help the job could never be done.

A PREVIEW of the valuable information that may be expected to come out of this re-

#### CONSUMPTION OF LEAN MEAT, FISH, AND POULTRY STEPS UP AS FOOD EXPENDITURES INCREASE



#### CONSUMPTION OF GREEN AND YELLOW VEGETABLES STEPS UP AS FOOD EXPENDITURES INCREASE



search is suggested in a study of nonfarm families recently made by the Bureau of Home Economics. Using what data from other studies are available, making estimates—as accurate as possible—where necessary, some significant observations stand out. They must be only tentative until the new consumption study is completed.

FIRST, the Bureau looked into the studies of a limited number of families not living on farms which had been made between 1913 and 1933. In these they found data on the actual amounts of different foods bought over the course of a year. Some families had little money, some had larger amounts, which they could spend for food. In no case could any of the families studied have been classed in the big income brackets.

TRANSLATING these amounts of foods into dollars was the next step. Food prices vary, of course, from year to year. It was necessary to convert all prices quoted in the various studies to the same period and bring them as up-to-date as possible. The period chosen was October-December 1934. Cost of food purchased by the various families was adjusted to October-December 1934 costs on the basis of average retail prices as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

QUANTITIES of food bought were then classified according to the food expenditures per person in family. From these figures, estimates could be made of the customary consumption habits of families spending specified amounts in 1934 for food. Table 1 on this page gives figures for all groups of foods.

PURCHASES of all kinds of food increase as the money available for food grows bigger. But the most arresting fact which stands out from this comparison of family consumption habits is that purchases of some foods increase much more than others.

TAKE two types: Grain products and milk. When the average amount spent for all foods per person (on the basis of October-December 1934 prices) was \$30 to \$60, 150 pounds of grain products were purchased. When expenditures were \$60 to \$90, the amount was 170 pounds, an increase of 13 percent. In the case of milk, when total expenditures were \$30 to \$60, an average of 125 pounds was bought, while families in the \$60 to \$90 expenditure group purchased 230 pounds, a gain of 84 percent.

APPARENTLY as buying power swells, the increase in purchases of different types of food is greatest for fruits and vegetables (other than potatoes and the dried legumes); next, for eggs and butter; and third, for milk and meat.

HOW good a diet would families get, spending the various per capita sums and selecting the indicated amounts of food?

NUTRITIONISTS in the Bureau of Home Economics examining these lists of foods have measured their food values and compared results with estimates of the kinds and amounts of food that will give an "adequate diet." This is what they find: On the basis of the way people apparently have been buying and of the prices which they had to pay in 1934, families in the first two groups shown in Table 1 failed to get a diet adequate for good health. Families in the third group were probably about on the borderline of getting a satisfactory diet. To provide diets whose average nutritive value afford a reasonable margin of safety over minimum requirements would necessitate, on 1934 prices, a food expenditure between \$120 and \$150 per capita per year.

SUPPOSE now that family expenditures for food were stepped up so that the minimum diet which every one in the country received was at least an adequate one, how much would the urban demand for farm products be expected to increase?

NO CENSUS of the number of families in the country is available which shows how many

[Concluded on page 23]

Table 1.—Estimates of yearly per capita consumption of principal foods or food groups, by nonfarm families (based on studies of family diets, 1913-33)

FOODS	Estimated average consumption in pounds when yearly per capita expenditure* for food is—							
	\$30 to \$60	\$60 to \$90	\$90 to \$120	\$120 to \$150	\$150 to \$180	\$180 to \$210	\$210 to \$240	\$240 to \$270
Grain products.....	150	170	170	180	190	190	190	190
Milk.....	125	230	270	340	350	365	380	400
Potatoes, sweetpotatoes.....	100	125	145	150	150	150	150	150
Dried legumes.....	10	12	13	14	15	15	15	15
Tomatoes, citrus fruits.....	20	35	55	70	90	110	120	130
Green, leafy, yellow vegetables.....	20	40	65	80	90	100	120	140
Other vegetables.....	20	30	45	55	65	75	80	85
Other fruits.....	40	90	150	175	200	210	220	230
Sugar.....	30	45	55	60	65	70	70	70
Butter.....	7	10	15	18	23	28	32	35
Other fats and fatty foods.....	20	21	23	25	25	24	23	22
Lean meat, fish, poultry.....	70	90	100	120	140	160	175	200
Eggs.....	10	20	27	35	42	45	48	45
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>622</b>	<b>918</b>	<b>1,135</b>	<b>1,322</b>	<b>1,445</b>	<b>1,542</b>	<b>1,623</b>	<b>1,712</b>

\* Adjusted to October-December 1934 values by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics retail food index.

## CONSUMERS' COUNSEL REPORTS RESULTS of BREAD COST INQUIRY

**B**READ PRICE increases or threatened increases, which were a problem to consumers in some cities last fall when the trade press predicted a general advance of a cent a pound—our readers will remember—provoked an inquiry by the Consumers' Counsel into the facts behind the proposed increase. In a questionnaire which was sent to bakers in all cities where a price advance had taken place or was threatened, the Consumers' Counsel asked bakers to volunteer information on costs, on formulas and types of ingredients used, so that consumers could judge for themselves whether the higher price was justified. It was the purpose of Consumers' Counsel to obtain for consumers just such self-protective information as is sought, and to a large degree obtained, by other economic groups. Consumers' Counsel and the Department of Agriculture, however, are not authorized by law to require bakers to furnish the information. They could only request it.

OUR LAST report on this inquiry, in the December 2, 1935 issue of the CONSUMERS' GUIDE, came at a time when bread prices were still pushing up, not generally, but here and there. Since the turn of the year the trend has been the other way, with the removal of the processing tax on wheat on January 6. A final report of the results of the inquiry can now be made.

QUESTIONNAIRES were sent to 535 bakers in 34 cities. They

were sent to commercial and chain-store bakers in each city from which reports had come that the price of bread had gone up. Of these, 114 came back indicating that the baker had moved, he had made no price advance, or baked no bread, leaving a net of 421. To this number of requests for simple business facts on the costs and composition of their bread, bakers made returns as follows:

SIX FILLED out the questionnaires and returned them to the Consumers' Counsel. Six definitely refused the information requested. Twenty-six replied that the information was not available or furnished incomplete answers which could not be used. Total of these replies of one kind or another is 38, out of 421 bakers.

CITIES and the net number of questionnaires sent to bakers within each city are listed here. Figures in parentheses indicate the number of bakers who failed to make any reply:

Allentown, Pa.....	9	(7)
Altoona, Pa.....	3	(3)
Bordentown, N. J.....	3	(1)
Bridgeport, Conn.....	18	(16)
Buffalo, N. Y.....	22	(22)
Butte, Mont.....	8	(8)
Dallas, Tex.....	8	(8)
Evansville, Ind.....	9	(7)
Harrisburg, Pa.....	14	(14)
Hartford, Conn.....	14	(13)
Houston, Tex.....	18	(17)
Indianapolis, Ind.....	16	(15)
Kansas City, Mo.....	15	(13)
Lewistown, Pa.....	1	(1)
Los Angeles, Calif.....	33	(29)
Louisville, Ky.....	6	(6)
Milwaukee, Wis.....	24	(16)
New Haven, Conn.....	19	(18)
Newport News, Va.....	3	(3)
Norfolk, Va.....	4	(4)
Pensacola, Fla.....	1	(1)

Philadelphia, Pa.....	20	(16)
Pittsburgh, Pa.....	35	(31)
Portsmouth, Va.....	1	(1)
Richmond, Va.....	5	(5)
Rochester, N. Y.....	14	(14)
St. Louis, Mo.....	30	(28)
Scranton, Pa.....	11	(11)
Sunbury, Pa.....	4	(4)
Toledo, Ohio.....	10	(10)
Trenton, N. J.....	11	(11)
Washington, D. C.....	19	(17)
Williamsport, Pa.....	6	(6)
York, Pa.....	7	(7)

NO REPLIES of any sort were obtained from 383 bakers. Each firm which failed to answer was sent a follow-up letter repeating the request for information.

ONE CONCLUSION is that most bakers will not voluntarily give consumers the facts to justify increased prices for their product. But it is possible that more replies might eventually have been received if the trend of bread prices had not turned downward. After the removal of the processing tax by the Supreme Court, bread prices began to go down. A few additional reports had been definitely promised but were not received. To the great majority of the questionnaires, however, no response of any kind was made at any time.

THE GENERAL INCREASE of 1 cent a loaf, which trade papers and others were discussing prior to the bakers' convention last fall, did not take place. Scattered increases, some large, some small, were reported during October, November, and December. So far as these are reflected in the average prices reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for 61 cities, they are summarized below.

FIFTY-EIGHT CITIES reported bread prices for October 8



and for December 31. During that interval this is what happened to the average retail prices per pound of white bread:

INCREASES IN 41 cities—

0.1 cent	15 cities
0.2 "	9 "
0.3 "	2 "
0.4 "	3 "
0.5 "	3 "
0.6 "	2 "
0.7 "	1 "
0.8 "	2 "
0.9 "	2 "
1.2 "	1 "
2.1 "	1 "

DECREASES IN 6 cities, amounting to 0.1 cent in 1 city, 0.2 cent in 2 cities, 0.3 cent in 1 city, and 0.5 cent in 2 cities.

NO CHANGE of price on December 31 as compared with October 8 was reported for 14 cities.

AVERAGE INCREASE for all cities was 0.3 cent per pound loaf. On October 8 the average price was 8.3 cents; on December 31 it was 8.6 cents.

WHAT HAPPENED to these prices after December 31 may be summarized in this manner:

OF THE 41 cities in which bread prices increased from October 8 to December 31, 1935, only 10, as of April 7, 1936, had maintained the December 31 prices; 5 others were higher than they were on October 8 but were 0.1 to 0.6 cent lower than on December 31; 7 had returned to their October 8 prices; and 18 had gone down since December 31 more than they had gone up before that date, and were from 0.1 to 2 cents lower on April 7 than they were on October 8; 1 city only was higher on April

7 than on either October 8 or December 31.

NET RESULT of all bread price changes before and after December 31 is that 29 cities reported lower average prices on April 7, 1936, than on October 8, 1935, 19 cities reported higher prices than at the earlier date, while 13 cities reported the same average prices on both dates. By far the larger number of the changes were small in amount. In only 11 of the 61 cities was the net change for the period as much as a half cent or more per pound loaf. The combined effect of all these changes was an average price of 8.2 cents per pound loaf for all cities reporting on April 7, 1936, 0.1 cent below the average for October 8, 1935.

POSSIBLY bakers can be induced to respond more generously to requests for facts behind bread prices from local consumers than from Washington. Other questions beside price increases sometimes need answering. Indeed it may be difficult to answer the question "What is the price of bread in this city?" (It may be more difficult to answer the question, "What is the retail price of bread baked in this city and shipped to outlying areas?") A quick survey of retail bread prices in the neighborhood of the city of Washington reveals how complicated such a thing as the price of bread may be.

WHITE BREAD baked in Washington by the large commercial bakeries generally sells at 8 cents wholesale for the pound loaf. In the city such bread sells to consumers for 9 cents or 10 cents retail, depending on the mark-up of the retailer.

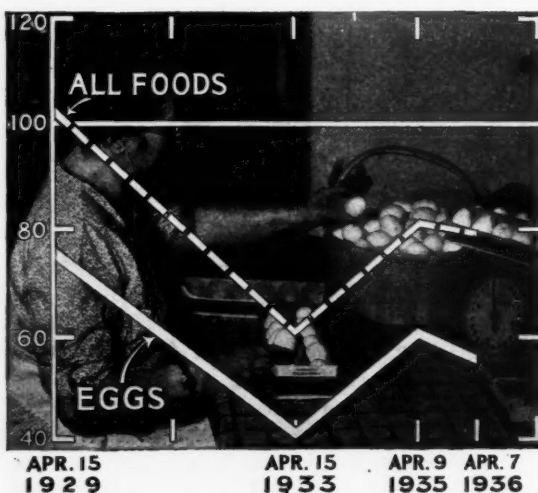
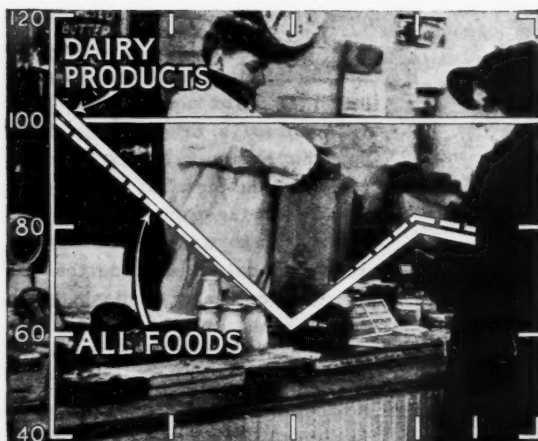
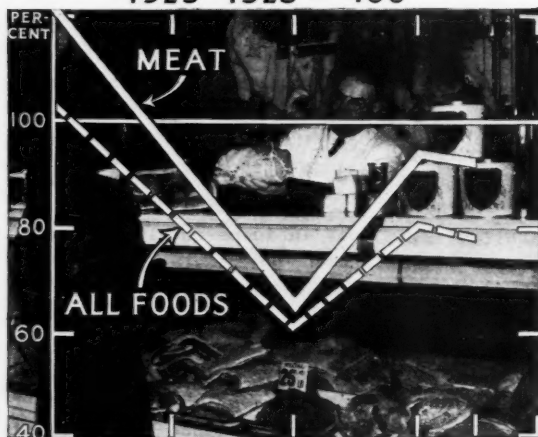
In the surrounding area it appears that such bread will sell for 9 cents retail in one town while in a nearby town the retail price for the same bread will be 10 cents.

THEN there is also considerable variation in weight of loaf in towns outside of Washington, but receiving bread from the Washington bakeries. At one place an 18-ounce loaf sells for 12 cents wholesale; at another a 20-ounce loaf sells for 10 cents wholesale; and at still another a 24-ounce loaf is found selling for 10 cents wholesale.

DISTANCE from Washington of the places where Washington bread is sold does not add to its wholesale or retail price. On the contrary, the survey revealed one brand of Washington bread selling for less at the outer limits of the Washington area per wholesale price than is charged for nearer to Washington or in the city itself. The 20-ounce loaf of this make of bread sold at some places for 8 cents wholesale, whereas nearer to Washington it sold for 10 cents. In the city of Washington a 10-cent wholesale price buys only 16 ounces of white bread under this brand.

THE reason for selling bread at a lower price after it has been hauled 30 miles or more by truck is said to be that local competition in some of these towns requires it. What, then, is to be said of the competition in Washington itself where there are so many bakeries offering their goods to the same consumers? Such a question consumers may ask bakers to answer if they examine bread prices and weights in their own cities.

## A PERSPECTIVE OF FOOD COST CHANGES 1923-1925 = 100



# Your Food Costs

**A**PRIL, trumpeting the opening of major fruit and vegetable parades to market from South-eastern States, Texas, and California, brought few disappointments this year to consumers.

SUPPLIES of many of these foods were enough better than last year to pull down the cost of fruits and vegetables generally to 5 percent below last April's level, although there was a very slight lift in prices over those 2 weeks previous, due mostly to higher potato prices. While meats, cereals, and some other foods are still well above their low prices of 1933, fruits and vegetables were selling on April 7 at an average of only 16 percent more than on April 15, 1933, and were 28 percent below April 15, 1929.

FOOD costs in general on April 7 were again below costs prevailing in the corresponding period in 1935. Since the first of the year food prices have dropped over 4 percent. This is just the opposite of the situation prevailing during the first quarter of 1935 when the index of city food costs advanced about 5 percent.

INDEX of retail food costs on April 7 as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics was 78.9 percent of the 1923-25 average. While the index was only slightly below costs on March 24, it was 3 percent below costs for April 9 last year. On April 15, 1929, the index of food costs stood at 100.8, while on April 15, 1933, it was 60.1.

EGGS and dairy products again exhibited the largest decline in costs during the 2-week period. Cereals and bakery products showed another small decline in costs. Other food groups exhibited only slight changes.

LOWER food prices during March did not result in lower cash income for farmers. Although there was a decline of 5 percent in farm prices, larger quantities shipped to market more than offset this price drop. Shipments of grain, truck crops, hogs, and eggs showed more than seasonal increases and were mainly responsible for larger cash income.

# Costs and Supplies

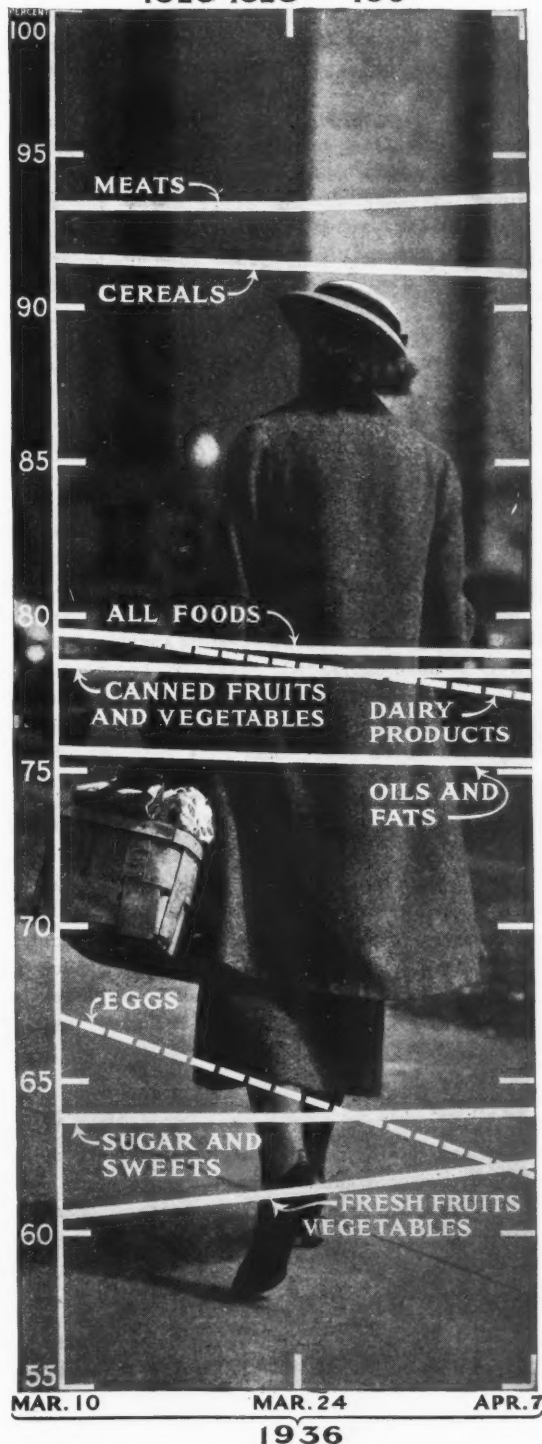
FARMERS' cash income from marketings during March totaled 513 million dollars compared with 467 million dollars in February and 429 million dollars in March 1935. The increase from February to March was in contrast to the usual seasonal decline. During the first quarter of 1936, farmers' cash income from marketings was about 20 percent more than in the same period of 1935.

FIRST shipments of green corn and cucumbers from Florida arrived during the first week in April. Asparagus shipments have been increasing weekly with California furnishing most of the supplies. Up to April 11, total asparagus shipments were almost twice as much as the same period last year. New carrots continued to arrive in larger volumes. Imperial Valley shipments up to April 11 were well ahead of last year and larger supplies are now coming from Texas. Texas new onions also were appearing in market in large quantities with shipments up to April 11 about twice as large as the corresponding period last year. New potato shipments were larger, but were offset by smaller movement of old potatoes. Spring cucumber production in Florida and Texas this year is estimated at 8 percent above last year.

STRAWBERRIES are coming to market in large quantities and prices should continue downward. Production from the second early producing States, however, has been curtailed by freezing temperatures and heavy rains. Total production from these States is now forecast at 2,661,000 crates, compared with 3,045,000 last year. Berries from this area should start moving to market the latter part of April.

FRUIT prospects for this year appear favorable since trees in most areas came through the winter in good shape. On April 1, it appeared that the southern peach crop would be average or above average this year. Frosts in California caused some damage to almonds, apricots, early cherries, peaches, plums, prunes, and grapes. Potential production of some of these crops has been reduced, but there is no

## A CLOSE-UP OF FOOD COST CHANGES 1923-1925 = 100



definite indication that State production has been lowered to a short crop basis. Damage was mitigated by the fact that prior to the frost it appeared that heavy thinning would be necessary due to the heavy set of fruit on the trees.

EGG production exhibited a more than seasonal increase during March. On April 1, production was about 4 percent above April 1, 1935, although it was still below the 5-year April 1 average. Further increases are expected during April and May, since feed costs are unusually low in relation to egg prices. Storage supplies of eggs on April 1 were unusually low despite the record increase in production per hen the preceding month. This indicates that most of the eggs were used for current consumption. Operators lost heavily on storage eggs last year and this may in part account for the small storage this year.

RETAIL egg prices continued downward from March 24 to April 7, dropping 1.4 cents a dozen. Wholesale egg prices appear to have reached their seasonal low point of the year in March. Since the first week in April, wholesale prices have advanced slightly so that some increase in retail prices may be expected. Retail prices in the spring and summer are expected to be lower than last year.

BUTTER production during March was higher than last year and is expected to continue upward for several months. Production usually increases at this time of the year due to larger cream supplies. The high price of butterfat compared to feed prices has further stimulated production. Total milk production in the first half of 1936 probably will be considerably greater than during the first half of 1935. However, it is not expected to be as large as during 1924-29.

STORAGE stocks of butter continued downward during March in spite of increased production. Demand for butter was fairly heavy and most supplies moved into retail channels. Demand for butter for storage this summer should be fairly heavy as the past season was very profitable to storage operators.

BUTTER PRICES to consumers declined 1.1 cents per pound during the 2-week period. This reflected similar changes in wholesale prices which have been going down steadily since mid-February. Consumers may expect a smaller

decline in butter prices or even a slight advance during April because the demand has been fairly heavy in relation to the supply.

AVERAGE retail white bread prices dropped 0.3 percent from March 24 to April 7. Rye bread decreased 0.1 cent a pound. White bread prices increased in 7 cities and decreased in 14 others. The only major increase occurred in Dallas, Texas, where prices went up 0.9 cent a pound. This partly offset a sharp drop which occurred there as a result of a bread war. Major decreases occurred in Cleveland, Minneapolis, and St. Paul, ranging from 0.3 to 0.5 cent a pound loaf.

LARGER hog and cattle slaughter seems likely to continue for several months due to favorable feed conditions. Hog supplies from April 1 until September 30, the end of the hog marketing year, are expected to be about 20 percent larger than last year. Trend of hog prices from April through June is likely to be downward in view of the probable increase in marketings.

RETAIL PRICES of chops and loin roast advanced 0.1 and 0.2 cent per pound from March 24 to April 7. Lard and most cured products, with the exception of sliced bacon, registered slight declines.

MARCH was the first month in over a year and a half that the supply of good and choice steers was larger than for a corresponding month in a previous year. Cattle slaughter from April to June is expected to be larger and of a better quality than last year. More better-grade steers should be slaughtered as the season progresses.

BETTER-GRADE cattle prices decreased, while prices of lower-grade steers increased during March, narrowing the price spread between the two grades. Prices of better-grade steers are not expected to change immediately although slight increases may occur after May.

BEEF and veal prices to consumers advanced slightly during the 2-week period. Round steak and veal cutlets registered major changes, and were up about one-half cent a pound. These advances occurred again when supplies were increasing, indicating that demand for beef has improved.



# Toward Better Consumer Buying Power

The GUIDE summarizes here changes in food prices in relation to city workers' earnings, based on the latest reports of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**C**ITY consumers' food costs have apparently started to level off at the same time that factory payrolls have been increasing.

FACTORY payrolls in March were 7 percent larger than March 1935 payrolls. Food prices in March were  $\frac{1}{2}$  percent below the level of the previous March. While this decline is not large, March prices were the first since mid-1933 to drop even slightly below the level of prices in the corresponding period of the year before. April 7 prices were almost 3 percent below April a year ago.

BECAUSE of this leveling off in food prices at a time when payrolls in factories were increasing, the ability of employed factory workers to purchase foods was 8 percent greater in March of this year than in March 1935. Their capacity to buy foods has made a gain of 54 percent from March 1933, but must step up 15 percent more if it is to reach its March 1929 level.

THESE measures refer only to factory workers as a group who have jobs. While employment in the past year has increased 2 per-

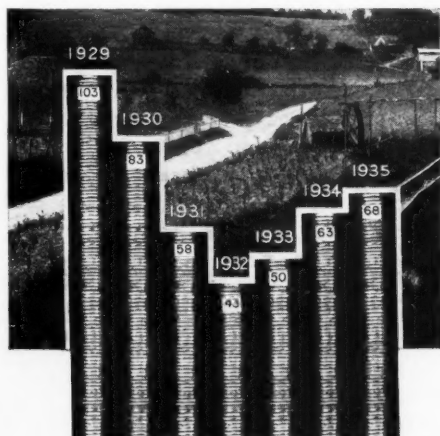
cent, there are many individual factory workers who have not shared in the general payroll increase. Nor do conditions among factory workers as a group reflect conditions among the millions of workers who are dependent on relief for their subsistence.

PRECISE gages of the purchasing power of all urban consumers are not available, but from estimates as accurate as can now be made, the food purchasing power generally of consumers not on farms was about 10 percent greater this March than last.

INCREASES in farm production—some of them planned under the old control programs of the AAA to correct the low production levels of drought years—and the removal of processing taxes have contributed to the present change in the food supply situation which is being reflected in prices to consumers. Compared with a year ago, the supply of foodstuffs coming to market during the first 3 months of 1936 is larger. Had there not been such a gain, the increase in payrolls which has occurred over the year would have resulted in higher food prices. The increased quantities have been enough to balance the larger number of dollars available to buy food and so kept prices from mounting.

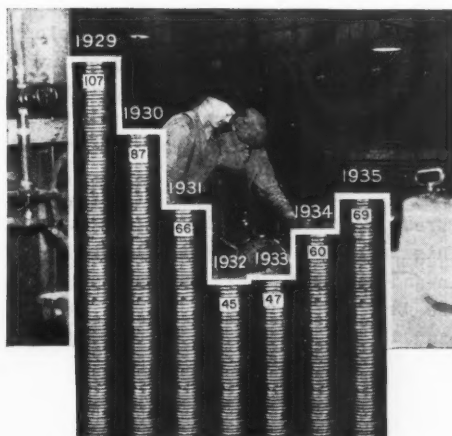
BARRING adverse crop conditions, production of many farm commodities is expected to be better this summer than last, which should tend toward still lower food prices. This downward trend in prices may be retarded by increases in consumer purchasing power.

[Concluded on page 23]



Farmers' Cash Income  
(1924-29=100)

Factory Payrolls  
(1924-29=100)



## THE WEATHER BUREAU LENDS A HAND

[Concluded from page 8]

several central points in western grazing country. These bulletins keep cattle raisers advised of range conditions. Because of the large expanse of range area, some sections may suffer severe drought while in others there is ample moisture. When it becomes necessary to ship stock from drought areas, livestock producers consult these Weather Bureau bulletins. Every Wednesday during the winter a "Snow and Ice Bulletin" is published by the Bureau which winter wheat growers utilize. Warnings of possible inundation from high tides or backwater blown up by winds are notice to rice growers to flood their crops so as to prevent the straw from being broken by winds.

FORECASTS help, too, in cutting losses en route from the farmer to consumers. Perishable farm produce must be protected against extremes of temperature. Air-conditioned and refrigerated cars help, but shippers must know the actual and expected temperature along their route if they are to keep their produce in the best condition. Bananas, for example, must be kept at a temperature between 58 and 65 degrees during shipment. Temperature below 55 degrees chills the fruit and causes deterioration. Temperature above 65 degrees produces over-ripening. Besides, bananas generate heat after being placed in a car. Similar precautions must be taken by shippers of vegetables, eggs, and other foods liable to damage from temperature extremes. Shipment of live animals is avoided when a hot wave is expected.

WEATHER BUREAU predictions as to temperature at marketing centers are a guide to shippers in meeting irregular demands dependent on temperature changes. Watermelon growers know that a sudden drop in temperature in cities cuts the demand for their fruit and is the signal for slacking up on shipments if they do not want their fruit to waste away unbought.

MANY more services of the Weather Bureau might be itemized. The list is long. This is enough to suggest the every-day, year-in-and-year-out, way in which this branch of the Department of Agriculture is lending its hand to the great task of using our resources in land with the greatest possible economy of effort and expense, and with the minimum of loss from predictable weather hazards.

LONG-TIME predictions might help even more in this struggle of producers against weather risks. "Thus far", the Weather Bureau says, "no laws of weather sequences have been discovered whereby reliable weather forecasts for long periods in advance can be made." New researches in this field are now under way.

SOME months ago the Secretary of Agriculture invited Scientists in the Weather Bureau and other branches of the Department to pool suggestions from experts in and out of the Government on how to conduct some fundamental weather research. Out of their deliberations has come a project to study "Long-range Weather and Crop Forecasting", on which eminent scientists are now working. First, they will study the possibilities of long-range forecasting; and second, analyze the influence of weather and other factors on crop production.

"THERE is perhaps", the Secretary explains, "one chance in ten that science will some day enable us to make long-range weather forecasts, but the value of such forecasts would be so enormous that the chance, whatever it may be, is worth investigating. Even if we never succeed in developing accurate long-range weather forecasts, it would be most useful to know the exact relationship between past weather and crop yields."

## SPRING MEAT IN THE MARKET

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fuel, but getting fat into the budget is not such a problem. The food values of lean meat are protein of the "complete" and "efficient" type found too in milk and eggs, and the minerals for building blood and muscle and bone, and Vitamin B for appetite, muscle tone, and high spirits; and Vitamin G for general well-being and keeping young. The lean meat of all animals is just about equally valuable, according to the latest information of the nutrition experts in the Bureau of Home Economics. So when a cut is almost all lean-meat nourishment it need not give a guilty conscience to the most conscientious budgeteer.

LAMB can go into the menu in more ways than most of us realize. Help in learning those ways comes by way of the Bureau of Home Economics bulletin, "Lamb as You Like it", for sale for 5 cents by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.

## SUPPLYING FOOD FOR ADEQUATE CONSUMPTION

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spent the various amounts shown in Table 1. There are estimates computed for 1929. These are contained in a report by the Brookings Institution. Using these Brookings figures and applying them in a general way to the 1934 picture, the Bureau has given a rough picture of the way the total demand for food products from urban families might be stepped up if families spending small amounts for foods were to have their food money increased.

Table 2.—Urban demand for food products might be increased if—

FOODS	Families spending less than \$90* per capita per year for food could buy diets costing \$90 to \$120*	Families spending less than \$120* per capita per year for food could buy diets costing \$120 to \$150*
	Percent	Percent
Flour, cereals .....	1	6
Milk .....	12	33
Potatoes, sweetpotatoes .....	10	13
Dried beans, peas, nuts .....	6	12
Tomatoes, citrus fruits .....	22	45
Leafy, green, yellow vegetables .....	25	46
Other vegetables .....	21	40
Other fruits .....	28	43
Sugar .....	13	21
Butter .....	20	37
Other fats .....	5	12
Lean meat, poultry, fish .....	7	23
Eggs .....	18	42

\*October-December 1934 price levels.

TABLE 2 shows these estimates, which are suggestive only because of the broad assumptions on which they are based, as applied to two groups of families. The first column shows how much demand for different foods might be increased if families spending less than \$90 per person a year could afford to spend between \$90 and \$120. The second estimates the possible increase were the food budgets of families spending less than \$120 per person a year increased from \$120 to \$150.

DEMAND for milk, to take one example, might—if these estimates are correct—be stepped up 12 percent if families under the \$90 per capita food spending class were lifted up to the \$90 to \$120 class. It might be increased 33 percent if families under the \$120 class were able to spend from \$120 to \$150 per person a year for all their food.

TREMENDOUS importance attaches to accurate estimates of possibilities for increasing the demand for food products. They open the picture to a healthier, happier nation. They present opportunities—and problems—for the food producers and distributors of the nation.

THROUGHOUT this study many estimates have had to be made. They have been made with the greatest possible care, but whether they come close to the mark of revealing actual conditions in the country will be tested when final reports are in from the new consumption study.

FARMERS, now and then, charged by some with the sole responsibility of producing all the foods necessary to give everyone an adequate diet, have a large stake in the findings of this important study. It will give a gage of the job ahead of them. But before farmers can undertake the job of producing a greater abundance, they have a question to put to industry. It is this: What will industry do to provide city consumers with jobs and incomes sufficient for every family to buy an adequate diet at prices which make it possible for farmers to produce the necessary abundance, not just for one year, but continuously?

IF YOU are moved to inquire further into the study made by the Bureau of Home Economics which is reviewed here, please hold off. We have reported as much detail as is now available, and the Bureau—limited in its personnel—is working full time on the more important new consumption study, results of which will be made public as soon as possible.

## TOWARD BETTER CONSUMER BUYING POWER

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CONSUMER interest is not concerned solely, of course, with price and income indexes. The more fundamental interest of consumers is in a better standard of living. That means a larger quantity of goods of high quality available for consumption. When payrolls go up faster than prices, consumers are able to buy more, but to put living standards on a higher level than ever before, the gain of consumer incomes over consumer prices must become a continuing process over a period of years.

## Our Point of View

THE CONSUMERS' GUIDE believes that consumption is the end and purpose of production.

To that end the CONSUMERS' GUIDE emphasizes the consumer's right to full and correct information on prices, quality of commodities, and on costs and efficiency of distribution. It aims to aid consumers in making wise and economical purchases by reporting changes in prices and costs of food and farm commodities. It relates these changes to developments in the agricultural and general programs of national recovery. It reports on cooperative efforts which are being made by individuals and groups of consumers to obtain the greatest possible value for their expenditures.

The producer of raw materials—the farmer—is dependent upon the consuming power of the people. Likewise, the consumer depends upon the sustained producing power of agriculture. The common interests of consumers and of agriculture far outweigh diversity of interests.

While the CONSUMERS' GUIDE makes public official data of the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, and Commerce, the point of view expressed in its pages does not necessarily reflect official policy but is a presentation of governmental and nongovernmental measures looking toward the advancement of consumers' interests.

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